

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A digital camera, comprising:

a camera body, said camera body being longer in a lateral direction than in a vertical direction perpendicular to the lateral direction;

an optical system including a lens positioned on a first side of said camera body;  
a flash device secured to said camera body on the first side of said camera body and at a same constant distance from said lens at all times, said lens and said flash device being arranged in the lateral direction, and said flash device flashing and illuminating a photographic subject;  
and

a cover device coupled to said camera body and configured to cover said lens and a front surface of said flash device, said cover device including a cover member configured to cover and uncover said lens and said flash device by sliding in the vertical direction, parallel to the surface of the first side of said camera body, within a range of said camera body at the first side of said camera body, wherein

said lens is arranged at an upper edge of the first side of said camera body.

Claims 2-3 (Canceled).

Claim 4 (Original): The digital camera according to Claim 1, wherein said cover device is configured to actuate a power switch to said digital camera when said cover device is moved from a closed position to an open position.

Claim 5 (Original): The digital camera according to Claim 1, further comprising a display device positioned on a second side of said camera body, wherein said second side of

said camera body is opposite to said first side of said camera body.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A digital camera comprising:

a camera body, said camera body being longer in a lateral direction than in a vertical direction perpendicular to the lateral direction;

an optical system having a lens positioned on a first side of said camera body, said optical system including a means for covering said lens by sliding in the vertical direction, parallel to the surface of the first side of said camera body, within a range of said camera body at said first side of said camera body; and

a flash device secured to the camera body on the first side of said camera body and at a same constant distance in the lateral direction from said lens at all times, wherein

said means for covering said lens covers a front surface of said flash device, ~~and~~

said flash device flashes and illuminates a photographic subject, and

said lens is arranged at an upper edge of the first side of said camera body.

Claim 7 (Original): The digital camera according to Claim 6, wherein said means for covering said lens includes a cover member that is slidably actuated between an open position and a closed position.

Claims 8-9 (Canceled).

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The digital camera according to Claim 6, wherein said means for covering said lens is configured to actuate a power switch to said digital camera when said means for covering said lens uncovers said lens.

Claim 11 (Original): The digital camera according to Claim 6, further comprising a display device positioned on a second side of said camera body, wherein said second side of said camera body is opposite to said first side of said camera body.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): A method for protecting a digital camera, the digital camera including a camera body that is longer in a lateral direction than in a vertical direction perpendicular to the lateral direction, an optical system having a lens positioned on a front of said camera body, and a flash device positioned on the front of said camera body and positioned at a same constant distance in the lateral direction from said lens at all times, said method comprising:

covering said lens with a cover device including a cover member coupled to said camera body and configured to cover and uncover said lens by sliding in the vertical direction, parallel to the surface of the first side of said camera body, within a range of said camera body at the front of the camera body;

covering a front surface of said flash device with said cover device when covering the lens; and

flashing and illuminating a photographic subject by said flash device, wherein  
said digital camera further includes said lens arranged at an upper edge of the front of  
said camera body.

Claims 13-14 (Canceled).

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 12 further comprising the step of actuating a power switch to said digital camera when said cover device

is moved from a closed position to an open position.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The method according to Claim 12, wherein said digital camera further includes a display device positioned on a back side of said camera body, wherein said back side of said camera body is opposite to said front side of said camera body.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The digital camera according to Claim 1, wherein said lens and said flash device are horizontally arranged side by side.

Claims 18-20 (Canceled).

Claim 21 (New): The digital camera according to Claim 1, further comprising:  
a switch device positioned on said camera body, said switch device configured to operate said cover member to cover and uncover said lens and said flash device.

Claim 22 (New): The digital camera according to Claim 21, wherein said switch device is provided on a second side of said camera body which is opposite to said first side of said camera body.

Claim 23 (New): The digital camera according to Claim 22, wherein said switch device includes a mechanical slide which operates between stop positions in said lateral direction to operate said cover member to cover and uncover said lens and said flash device.

Claim 24 (New): The digital camera according to Claim 23, further comprising:

a display device provided on said second side of said camera body, wherein said mechanical slide includes a display cover coupled to said camera body, said display cover configured to slide between covered and uncovered stop positions to cover and uncover, respectively, said display device, wherein

said cover member is coupled to said display cover so that said cover member is configured to (1) uncover said lens and said flash device when said display cover is slid to said uncovered stop position, and (2) cover said lens and said flash device when said display cover is slid to said covered stop position.

Claim 25 (New): The digital camera according to Claim 24, wherein said second cover device includes latches at each of said stop positions to releasably lock said second cover into said opened and closed stop positions.

Claim 26 (New): The digital camera according to Claim 21, wherein said switch device includes an electrical switch to turn off and on, respectively, a power supply to operate said digital camera when said cover member is operated to cover and uncover said lens and said flash device.

Claim 27 (New): The digital camera according to Claim 1, further comprising:  
a shutter mechanism configured to take in a reflection of light from said photographic subject, said flash device flashing and illuminating said photographic subject when said shutter mechanism is released.

Claim 28 (New): The digital camera according to Claim 6, further comprising:

a shutter mechanism configured to take in a reflection of light from the photographic subject, said flash device flashing and illuminating the photographic subject when the shutter mechanism is released.

Claim 29 (New): The method according to Claim 12, wherein  
the digital camera includes a shutter mechanism configured to take in a reflection of light from the photographic subject, and  
the flashing and illuminating of the photographic subject is performed in response to releasing the shutter mechanism.